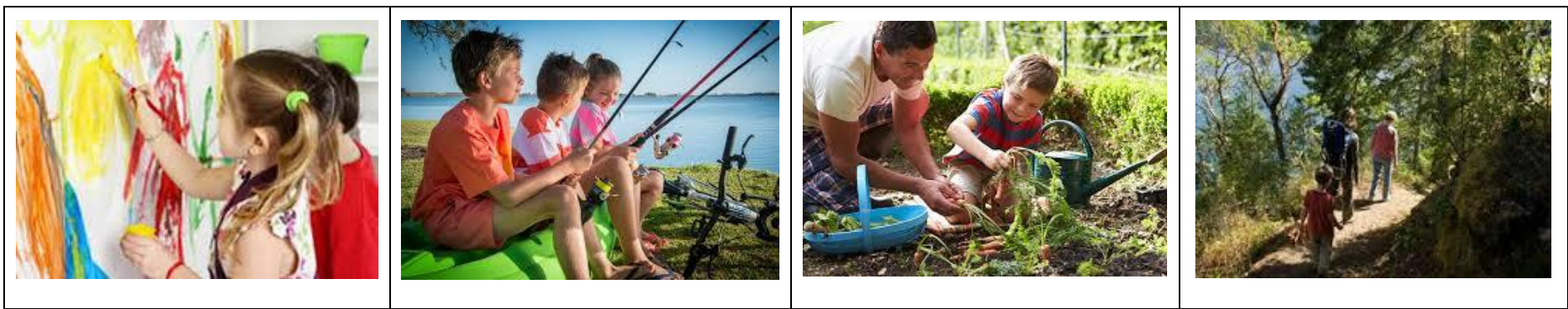


Summer Juvenile Justice Activities



Something we have learned about helping kids involved in the juvenile justice system is that improving opportunities for prosocial leisure and recreational activities builds skills in various areas of their lives and improves outcomes. Unfortunately, many of these kids don't get a lot of opportunities to participate in fun, healthy activities due to family finances, lack of transportation, parent's work schedules, AODA issues, etc. Over the summer, the Juvenile Justice team provided a number of fun activities to help our kids find wellness through positive interactions with peers and appropriate adults. After asking for and receiving a number of donations by very generous county employees, the Community Response Panel and area businesses the team was able to offer some awesome opportunities for some Jefferson County kids with a lot of risk factors. Transportation was provided by JJ Team staff, and fees, lunch, snacks and supplies were provided by donations.

Outdoors Group – once a month a group of boys would get together to do something fun outdoors. In June, the group went hiking at Devil's Lake. Though timid at the thought of a day of exercising and heights, the boys were all in and had a great day. The activity did so much more than give them a day without boredom; it built up life skills in a number of areas, including positive self-esteem, appropriate peer interactions, perseverance, responsibility and physical activity. Almost all of the boys had some exposure to substance use, and this activity really showed them an alternative "high" to drugs or alcohol. The boys also participated in a day of fishing at the Rock River. This taught skills such as relaxation, positive self-esteem/sense of accomplishment, appropriate peer interactions, responsibility and independent living skills. After fishing the boys enjoyed brats and burgers at the CSP. This taught them about giving back to their community to assist others who need help. It was a great day.

Artwork Group – another big hit of the summer was our artwork group. Many of our kids have great talent in the arts and find art to be incredibly enjoyable and relaxing. Twice a month a group of co-ed kids of various ages came to the Department to draw, paint, tie-dye and color and had a great time doing it. The skills they gained include: sense of mentorship and building community as the older kids would assist the younger kids, positive self-esteem, sense of accomplishment, positive peer interactions, patience, and coping techniques – lots of our kids draw/color when they need to calm down. You can see the fruits of their labor by purchasing a Juvenile Justice Awareness Calendar in October!

Gardening Club – a small group of boys and girls really enjoyed getting their hands dirty, planting some flowers and nurturing them to grow this summer. Once a month these kids came to gardening group and built valuable skills in relaxation, coping, pride and self-esteem, sense of accomplishment, independent living and community service. The Master Gardeners paid a visit to the group as well, and both the kids and the adult helpers enjoyed that.

Summer has flown by and the kids have settled back into their routines at school. We hope that they learned from the activities and learned from us. As always, we sure did learn some great things from them. As October looms right around the corner, the JJ team asks for your continued support in raising money to fund more of these activities in the future. We will continue to sell Codi's yummy popcorn through October, and our calendars will be for sale soon. Also, we will be hosting a chili cook-off and encourage individuals or teams to enter a pot of chili or come join us for a really fun lunch. Thank you!